

**TBIS –English 188—Theme-Based Inquiry Seminar**  
Spring 2004 –Section 015C—Meets 3:00-4:30pm MW  
**Endangered Oceans**



Department of English Home Page: <http://www.english.uwosh.edu>

**Instructor Name**  
Department of English  
Office Telephone

**Office Hours**  
MW 1:50-2:50 and F 1:50-2:50 by  
appointment  
MW 4:40-5:10pm  
Radford Hall  
e-mail address

Although the ocean covers much of the earth's surface, we here in the Midwest often think of it as distant and insignificant to our lives, except as a destination for a beach vacation. Yet the truth is that the oceans and the resources they harbor are now under siege from both human greed and environmental change.

The oceans are among our last great wild places, without national boundaries, and governed by unenforceable international agreements. As a result, the oceans are subject to the insults of waste dumping, oil spills from mineral exploitation, wasteful discard of unwanted fish, and overfishing to the point of precipitous decline of the majority of species netted for human consumption. Moreover, the vastness of the oceans makes them the setting for piracy on the high seas, often involving badly maintained ships that pose environmental threats.

Then too, industrial fishing is widely perceived as America's most dangerous occupation. In addition, global warming is changing the marine environment in unpredictable ways. Are these problems ones for scientists or politicians or naval authorities? Can our seas continue to be self-governing? How can we balance the traditional independence of the people who fish with our responsibilities towards our greatest resource? Why should we who live in the Midwest care about what happens on the oceans? Resources for this class with resources for this class will include books, articles, websites, videos, and a field trip.

**Textbooks:**

Tim O'Brien. The Things They Carried. Broadway Books, 1999.  
 Stephen Crane. The Open Boat and Other Stories. Dover, 1993.  
Endangered Oceans: Opposing Viewpoints. Greenhaven, 2004.  
 Linda Greenlaw. The Hungry Ocean. Hyperion. 2000.  
 Sebastian Junger. The Perfect Storm. 1999.  
 Elaine P. Maimon and Janice Peritz. A Writer's Resource. McGraw Hill, 2003.

Additional materials via electronic reserve and web site URLs (see future handouts).

**Course Format and Requirements:** In-class activities will include listening to short lectures; working in the Radford Writing Lab on research and writing; participating in group discussions; raising and exploring questions in an open-ended fashion---i.e. not expecting specific answers to emerge; watching videos; and short periods of writing. Class attendance and participation are absolutely mandatory. You are expected to meet with the professor during office hours or at other times by appointment to discuss your work at least twice during the semester.

Suggestions for papers will attempt to provide ideas, inspiration, and challenge. These essays will provide opportunities to review our reading, lectures, and discussions and for students to explore their reactions in depth. Quizzes give students the opportunity to show that they have done the reading.

**What About Late Papers? Missed Quizzes? Class Participation?**

- All papers are due at the beginning of the class period on the day assigned or they will be considered late and result in the loss of half a letter grade per day.
- Because this class emphasizes direct student interaction, regular attendance is mandatory for passing the course. Absence of more than two classes will affect your grade.
- Excused absences are for documented medical emergency or for university events. Students who miss extended periods of class even because of illness should drop the course in a timely fashion because of the emphasis on discussion.
- Everyone is expected to participate actively in discussion, and it counts significantly in the grading. Learning to participate effectively in groups is critical to success in the workplace. .
- There are no make-up quizzes.
- You are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the professor to go over a draft of papers in advance of the due date. Also make use of peer tutoring at the Writing Center.

**Written Work, Grades, and Exams.**

4 Quizzes	10%
7 two-three page papers (lowest grade dropped)	60%
In-class writing including journaling	10%
WebBoard	5%
Class participation	10%
Conferences with professor	5%

**Summary of Assignment Due Dates:**

Quizzes February 23, March 3, April 12, May 12  
 Papers due February 11, 18, March 10, March 24, April 7, April 28, May 5  
 Two meetings with the professor by appointment to discuss the journal and other matters.

**Dates for Radford Writing Lab:**

February 16, 18; March 3, 8, 10, 29, 31; April 19, 24.

## OVERALL EXPECTATIONS

- Good writing skills, including organization, clarity, and technical skills
- Evidence of thoughtful engagement with the reading, discussions, lectures, videos, web sites
- Completeness and comprehensiveness in both class discussion and written work
- Demonstration of original thought in intellectually responsive and energetic critical thinking
- Timeliness, energy, commitment to "making the class work" for all students

## GRADING EXPECTATIONS For ESSAYS and CLASSWORK

### **Building Confidence and Developing Ideas in Class Discussion:**

Successful class discussions require trust and honesty. The purpose is to encounter others' responses, generate new ideas, provoke a more thoughtful or complete understanding, rather than to transfer information as fact. The most important class activity at some class sessions will be participating in lively and group discussions. Participate actively, because discussion counts in grading. Be a good listener so that you can point out the connections between your ideas and others who have spoken. Ask questions. Respect and explore other people's ideas even when you disagree. Class discussion is another way of conveying information, and it is just as important as the professor's lectures or the reading.

### **Organization**

20%

Have an overall focus and aim to make two or three main points. Trying to cover everything will tend to make your discussion ramble. Have a thesis at the beginning of your paper. Point out how one idea leads to another idea.

### **Sentence Structure and Style**

20%

Aim for clarity in writing style. Vary the length of your sentences. Pay attention to diction.

### **Grammar and Proficiency in Documentation**

20%

Show that you have good language skills. Write complete sentences; check spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Refer to a handbook; review rules and conventions for MLA documentation. Demonstrate mastery of computer skills by offering a professional presentation--readers are more eager to read your work when your paper is attractive.

### **Comprehensive Ideas and Use of Research**

20%

Provide comprehensive evidence that you have read and understood the assignments. Use the readings to give you ideas to respond to and build on. Try not to write a report that simply retells what you have read; instead, provide a lively analysis of what you think is meaningful and significant. Persuade others to agree. Use examples and details to support your ideas. Make thoughtful use of your research that demonstrates that you can integrate ideas into your own thinking process.

### **Original Thought**

20%

Share your own original thoughts, insights, and comparisons. This means going beyond ideas generated in class and exploring your own ideas. Many times you will be in a process of testing out your thoughts; no one expects you to have completely decided what you value about every point--but try to write thoughtfully about what has challenged or excited you, and why.

**WRITING PROJECT EVALUATION GUIDE**  
**Representative--but not exclusive or exhaustive--Skills**

Thanks for sharing your work. This is an opportunity for us to share insights and concerns about your work. I hope this process will be helpful to you as we work together to strengthen your writing skills. Please know that I am ready to discuss these comments and offer additional clarification or suggestions. Overall concerns, questions:

	Needs Improvement	Mostly OK. Understandable Communicates	Provides Leadership To Reader
<b><i>Organization</i></b>	1	2	3
Thesis			
Topic Sentences			
Narrowed focus			
Coherence			
Transitions			
Non-repetitive conclusion			
<b><i>Clarity and Effectiveness</i></b>	1	2	3
Variety in Sentence Structure			
Appropriate Academic Diction			
Precise word choice			
<b><i>Language Skills and Technical Execution</i></b>	1	2	3
Grammar			
Punctuation			
Margins			
MLA Style			
Printing			
<b><i>Completeness and Comprehensiveness</i></b>	1	2	3
Representatively Chosen Points			
Development and Depth of Discussion			
Specific Examples and Details			
Use of Quotations from the Text When Appropriate			
Use of Research When Appropriate			
<b><i>Original Thought and Ideas</i></b>	1	2	3
Comparison-Contrast			
Or Personal Anecdote (where appropriate)			
Use of Multiple Scenes			
Clever Thinking			
Authentic Voice			

Overall Writing Grade \_\_\_\_\_

5-6= D	6.5-7.5=C/D	8-9= C	9.5-10.5=B/C	11-12= B	12.5-13.5=A/B	14-15= A
--------	-------------	--------	--------------	----------	---------------	----------

Copy this page and submit your self-evaluation with each paper.

## **Expectations for Grades**

An "A" grade represents thoughtful, sustained, and imaginative response to the course through active and insightful comments in class and good teamwork skills in discussion. Written work is technically excellent as well as carefully organized, comprehensive, creative, and intellectually strong.

An "A/B" grade represents engaged, insightful participation in class and excellent written work. Often the difference between an "A" and an "A/B" is that the level of work is not consistent throughout the course. Or writing may be reasonably comprehensive and technically strong, but either is not well developed or lacks original thought.

A "B" grade represents thoughtful writing and participation in class, but often lacks full development of ideas and/or the ideas are somewhat limited in scope and/or they represent an inappropriately narrowed focus. The student may need more work on embodying her/his ideas in convincing and organized ways in the writing. The student may not demonstrate knowledge of representative ideas throughout the assigned reading. Sometimes a "B" student needs to study a writing handbook to brush skills in grammar, punctuation, use of research and documentation. Nevertheless, a "B" student is engaged, interested, lively in class discussion, and shows comprehensive understanding of the readings. A "B" grade is a very good grade and definitely should not be perceived as an indication of inadequacy.

A "B/C" grade often emerges when a student doesn't take the time to read the assignments in depth and neglects to think through his/her own responses to the reading. As a result, a student often has a good general understanding of the reading, and can discuss the overall themes of the essays, but has difficulties backing up his/her ideas with examples and details. Often, for these same reasons, a "B/C" student has a harder time participating in class discussion. There are often significant problems in grammar, punctuation, and use of research and documentation. Sometimes, on the other hand, a well-motivated student will fall into the "B/C" range because she/he fails to grasp the kind of critical, analytical, and imaginative thinking required to successfully grapple with reading and writing fully-developed essays.

A "C" grade represents significant weaknesses in understanding the readings in appropriate depth and detail, and reluctance to participate in class discussions and group activities. Essays have undeveloped ideas and significant grammatical and technical problems.

Grades of "C/D," "D," and even "F" emerge. Sometimes these grades represent even more egregious versions of the difficulties discussed above. Sometimes the student has some really bad luck---family problems, financial difficulties, personal illness--and fails to get help in time. Or the course just doesn't work for the student for any number of reasons, and she/he drifts away and forgets to drop the course formally with the Registration's office.